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WHITE HOUSE TASK FORCE ON  
HURRICANE KATRINA RESPONSE



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2005

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)

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**Commodity Transportation:** New Orleans ports are very significant for exports of grains and oilseeds, accounting for 65-70 percent of all grain exports. Last year, 22 percent of wheat, 71 percent of corn, 65 percent of soybean exports went through Louisiana ports. The hurricane impact on these ports is significant. The Port of New Orleans has been locked down to traffic going in and out of port. The Mississippi River is open to inner harbor navigation, mainly fleeting services and towboat operators trying to sort out the damage. No ocean vessel traffic is moving inbound or outbound. The major problem areas are south of New Orleans, where any type of inner harbor navigation is difficult. Many barges, boats, ferries, debris, etcetera are either floating, sunk, or on top of levies that impede navigation and will impede channel clearing efforts. The major concern is getting electricity to the area – poles are down and difficult to find at this point. In addition, electricity outages at grain elevators in the Gulf Coast Region are limiting shipments from those origins and grain shippers from the upper valley are experiencing extreme difficulties and increased barge tariffs, which they mostly attribute to drought conditions. However, grain shipments are not currently in peak season, as the harvest in the upper valley is still a month away. As we approach peak grain harvest and transportation season in the Upper Mississippi Valley the pressures will grow to ensure an orderly market.

**Farmer and Rancher Assistance:** In response to Hurricane Katrina, USDA State Emergency Boards began meeting on August 31 to coordinate agricultural-related responses at the county, state and national levels in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama will coordinate damage assessments to area crops, livestock and other agriculture-related operations. Below are initial observations reported by the State emergency Boards on August 31:

### Louisiana

The sugarcane crop is laid down; weather should help bring some back up with the ability to harvest most at an increased cost. Cattle are a large concern: St. Bernard Parish, with estimated 150,000 head is completely under water. There are dairy concerns of spoilage with producers due to transportation accessibility near New Orleans. Still undetermined what effects to the dairy cattle and facilities in the area: 275 of 308 dairies may be impacted. Eight percent of grain sorghum and corn is already harvested, what remains can be harvested at increased expense. There is severe Nursery Crop damage in Tangipahoa Parish-mostly field grown.

### Mississippi

Expect significant damage to rice crop (much of the rice in the Delta is laying down). The cotton loss predicted at around 10%. Not yet possible to physically survey damage.

### Alabama

An estimated 200,000 chickens are lost. Corn is on the ground, which may take 3 to 4 times longer with special techniques to harvest, though fuel costs may make that unfeasible.

### Florida

Florida expects around \$400 million in crop loss in Miami Dade County, of which approximately \$300 million is in nursery crops and is worse than originally expected.

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE (DOC)

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**Three NOAA Navigation Response Teams are deployed to survey priority channel and port locations.** The survey products produced by these teams will help determine when ports can be reopened.

**The NOAA Contract Ship *Davidson* has commenced survey operations** in areas south of New Orleans that are critical to the reopening of the port.

**The NOAA Hydrographic Survey Vessel *Thomas Jefferson* is in transit from Norfolk.** The vessel will produce updated nautical charts for impacted regions, revealing navigation hazards that could impact transit and commerce.

**Products from NOAA aerial surveys (digital photography) of impacted coastal areas will be available on the Internet today.**

**NOAA will be working to determine the impacts of the storm on living marine resources, including commercial and recreational fisheries** that are economically important to the region. NOAA efforts to work with local communities to restore coastal wetlands that are important both ecologically and economically will also continue as soon as it is feasible.

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service will **determine the storm's impact on the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fleet, oyster industry, and other important fisheries.** The Bureau of Economic Analysis will estimate **hurricane costs not captured by regular source data** as part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter GDP and other indicators for August and September.

**NOAA is currently examining federal fishery regulations** in the Gulf of Mexico for potential management options **to ease the regulatory burden on commercial and recreational fishermen, while continuing to protect the marine resources.** NOAA will also complete an assessment of the storm's impacts on habitat and fishery resources in the Gulf.

The National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) is working with FEMA to lend its technical expertise from the Building and Fire Research Laboratory to assess structural damage and provide assistance. NIST's **Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)** will review the impact of the hurricane on small manufacturers in those areas of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama affected by the storm.

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) is coordinating with FEMA and identifying resources to deploy. **Up to \$7 million in FY 2005 funds could be deployed to build new/improved infrastructure to aid in economic recovery.**

**EDA is also reviewing economic development recovery plans from previous disasters (9-11 and Hurricane Andrew) in anticipation of a similar effort for Hurricane Katrina.**

The Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) has been asked to utilize the **Defense Priorities and Allocations System (DPAS)** to prioritize procurement of goods and services for the restoration effort--temporary housing and plastic sheeting are likely major requirements.

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## **DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD)**

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### **U.S. Northern Command:**

- Established Joint Task Force Katrina at Camp Shelby, Mississippi (LTG Honore).
- Two active duty O-6 officers assigned as liaisons to Department of Homeland Security Principal Federal Official.

### **Total DoD Response Personnel: 17,800**

- Active Duty: 4,700
- National Guard: 13,100

### **National Guard Support: 13,113**

- 12,267 Army
- 846 Air Force

### **Total Helicopters: 154**

- Currently assigned to JTF Katrina: 100
- Expected by 1 September: 54

### **Total Airlift Aircraft: 6**

### **Total Ships: 9**

- On-Station: 3
- Enroute: 5
- Staging: 1

**Hospital Beds: 2,500**

- Afloat: 2,000
- Ashore: 500

**Defense Support of Civil Authorities****U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)**

- Teams deployed in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi for ice and water distribution, levee inspections and repairs, structural integrity and inspections, and developing plans for temporary shelters and debris removal.
- Responsible for levee repair and New Orleans floodwater remediation.
  - Repaired one of three levee breaches
  - Continues around the clock repair

**Approved Requests for DoD Assistance:**

- Defense Coordinating Officers deployed to Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi – co-located with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) counterparts.
- Alabama Defense Coordinating Officer released; prepared to support Mississippi.
- Four DoD installations are now supporting FEMA as staging areas: Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama; Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana; Meridian Naval Air Station, Mississippi; and Old England AFB, Louisiana.
- Seven helicopters and 28 aircrew members are supporting Search and Rescue and transportation for FEMA.
- DoD aircraft completed the transportation of eight civilian Swift Water Rescue teams from California to Louisiana on August 31.
- Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers from all Services are providing liaison support between FEMA National and Regional Headquarters State Emergency Operations Centers.
- DoD is providing a 500-bed hospital (New Orleans International Airport).
- DoD is providing 36 helicopters (12 Medical Evacuation Helicopters; 12 Medium Lift Helicopters; and 12 Heavy Lift Helicopters) to support transport of Federal personnel, supplies, equipment and casualties in Mississippi and Louisiana.

- FEMA contracted directly with the Defense Logistics Agency for 583,000 cases of Meals Ready to Eat.
- Air drop of Meals Ready to Eat and water at Stennis Space Center, Hancock County, Mississippi.

**Outstanding FEMA Requests for DoD Assistance:**

- FEMA withdrew request for COMMANDO SOLO (EC-130 E/J) aircraft to provide AM, FM, HF and TV communications support.
- FEMA withdrew request for Aerial reconnaissance platform for damage assessment.
- Eight hundred personnel to assist the American Red Cross with shelter support. National Guard providing Support.
- Deployment of 10 Federal Medical Shelters (FMS) to: Eglin AFB, Pensacola, FL (2 FMS); Fort Polk, LA (4 FM); Naval Air Station, Meridian, MS (2 FMS); and Mississippi Air National Guard Base, Jackson, MS (2 FMS).
- Two helicopters to support the Department of Transportation for transportation of damage assessment teams.
- Civil Air Patrol to conduct aerial damage assessments.
- Naval Construction Battalion Center at Gulfport, Mississippi for Federal Operations Staging Center.

**Status of Military Forces**

**Disposition of U.S. Naval Forces:**

- USS BATAAN with 2 MH-60, 3 MH-53, 2 Landing Craft, Air Cushion, and 1 Landing Craft is currently in the vicinity of New Orleans, Louisiana; capability also includes 1 Field Surgical Team, 60 beds with nursing care and 300 beds with minimal care.
- HSV2 SWIFT (High-Speed Support Vessel) currently loading supplies in Ingleside, Texas will depart on 31 August.
- USNS ARCTIC (Logistics Service Support Ship) currently on the east coast of Florida and will be on station in vicinity of New Orleans, Louisiana on 1 September
- Three vessel Expeditionary Strike Group at Norfolk Naval Station: USS IWO JIMA, USS TORTUGA, and USS SHREVEPORT with medical (includes 60 beds with nursing care; 300 beds with minimal care) and humanitarian assistance supplies will depart 31 August and arrive 4 September

- USNS COMFORT at Baltimore, Maryland will depart 2 September and arrive 8 September.
- USS GRAPPLE (Rescue Salvage Ship) is scheduled to arrive on 6 September and will render assistance to disabled ships, provide towing, diving, and heavy-lift capabilities.
- USS HARRY S TRUMAN (Aircraft Carrier) is enroute and scheduled to arrive on 1 September.

#### **Disposition of U.S. Army Forces:**

- Two Aviation Battalions from Fort Hood, Texas are deploying to Hammond Air Force Base vicinity of Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

#### **Evacuation of Superdome in New Orleans**

- Joint Task Force Katrina has three courses of action for evacuation at the Superdome in New Orleans: air, ground, and water.
- Per LTG Honore, media reports are false concerning gunfire on transportation assets
- Evacuation security operations are under the control of the Mayor; National Guard is in support of City Police forces

#### **Air Evacuation**

- Helicopters have commenced operations; 15 flights per hour
- Air route is from Naval Air Station New Orleans for fuel and water, then to Superdome for passengers and then to either New Orleans Airport or regional medical facilities depending on health status
- Conducting triage of personnel at Astrodome, Houston or regional medical facilities

#### **Ground Evacuation**

- Personnel walking to staging area through nearby Hyatt hotel.
- Also using 2.5 ton trucks to transport personnel through high-water to staging areas
- Using 475 civilian buses to transport personnel to Astrodome
- Air and ground transportation stopped due to logistics and route difficulties; operations have recommenced

#### **Water Evacuation**

- Landing Craft, Air Cushion (LCAC) and Landing Craft Utility (LCU) operations deemed not viable due to Superdome distance from river, available routes and possible damage to vessels
- Will use craft to move supplies in vicinity of New Orleans

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## **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DOEd)**

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DOEd can delay for up to one year implementation of No Child Left Behind corrective actions, e.g. Adequate Yearly Progress, etc., for affected school districts and will provide any/all allowable relief and flexibility to affected States with regard to administrative requirements and the timely expenditure of funds.

A process has put into place whereby individuals living in the impacted areas may delay payment on their student aid loans, without penalty and has extended deadlines for affected institutions of higher education.

DOEd's Facility Clearinghouse is being redirected to assist schools on reconstruction and renovation issues.

DOEd [will](#) coordinate efforts with the USA Freedom Corps to assist affected school districts.

Grantees in the affected areas that have received funds under its Emergency Management Response Crisis program have been contacted to determine if they are in a position to provide assistance to their school district or other neighboring districts.

Chief State School Officers in the affected states have been contacted with offers of assistance and urged to submit a list of specific needs to DOEd.

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## **DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE)**

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- Over 2 million customers, or 11 percent of total customers, remain without electric power due to Hurricane Katrina in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi. These are primarily in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama where 35 percent of customers are without power in those three states.
- Extensive flooding continues to be a major issue for electricity restoration as is the unprecedented scope of the damage. Availability of line crews is also an issue. As Florida utilities finish their restoration work their crews are beginning to move to other states. Crews from other states are also beginning to arrive to assist in the restoration.
- Emergency Support Function-12 has been activated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to support multiple locations. DOE staff is now at the National Response Coordination Center at FEMA HQ, FEMA Regions IV and VI, and the State Emergency Operation Centers in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

- Entergy reports that its single biggest problem to restoring power in the Greater New Orleans area is the lack of food and water for its repair crews who are literally sleeping in their trucks. DOE staff on site in Louisiana has this morning provided GIS coordinates to FEMA so that shipments can begin to these workers.
- Electricity outages are a major issue in restoration of the Colonial Pipeline and the Plantation Pipeline. Key pump stations in LA and MS are without power. The LA and MS Public Service Commissions are working with power companies to assess the situation and provide guidance on priorities.
- EPA issued waivers for all 50 states to make available to first responders fuel that is currently restricted due to Clean Air Act restrictions. These waivers are effective immediately and will run through September 15.
- Secretary Bodman announced that DOE has already approved one request for loans of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.
- The Mineral Management Service reports that of the 70 companies reporting, 482 platforms and 79 rigs remain evacuated. Oil production shut in is 1,371,814 barrels per day, which represents 91 percent of daily oil production in the Gulf. Natural gas production shut in is 8,345 billion cubic feet per day, or 83 percent of daily gas production. For companies reporting to MMS, cumulative shut in production for the period 8/26/05 – 8/31/05, represents about 1 percent each of the yearly production of oil and natural gas in the Gulf of Mexico.
- The Louisiana Offshore Oil Port has suffered minimal damage at a booster station and the storage terminal. Emergency generators are in place and repairs are scheduled. Deliveries from the St. James Terminal are expected to commence tomorrow. The single biggest need now is for power restoration by Entergy.
- The Strategic Petroleum Reserve at New Orleans Elmwood complex remains shut down. Bayou Choctaw, Bryan Mound, Big Hill and West Hackberry sites, however, are operational and will be able to provide crude oil in the loan program noted above.
- Colonial and Plantation petroleum product pipelines, which provide the majority of gasoline, diesel fuel, and jet fuel to the Southeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Northeast states, have taken steps to begin operation.
  - Colonial is now operating at 750,000 barrels per day. Once additional generators are activated at inactive pump stations, production will increase to 1.2 to 1.3 million barrels per day. Further increases cannot be made until normal power is restored. The capacity of Colonial is about 2.4 million barrels per day. Solutions for power restoration are being actively pursued, and we should have additional information on this process in the next situation report.

- Plantation is now operating at 25% of capacity and hopes to be up to 50% of normal operations by Friday
- Capline, a crude oil pipeline serving the Midwest, is planning to restart operations in the next day or two. Power has been restored to almost every pumping station. Capline plans to restart this evening and has sufficient supply at St. James Terminal to run at reduced rates for three days.
- Gulf Coast refiners dependent upon sour crude supplies (Mars and Poseidon) will not be able to obtain new supplies as long as the production platforms remain closed.

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## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)**

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**EPA** emergency response personnel are working in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to continue to help assess the damage and prepare for cleanup in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. EPA is responsible for cleanup of hazardous material including oil and gasoline in the area. EPA employees have been deployed to the region to assist with assessment and cleanup. Our national and regional Emergency Operations Centers are currently operating 24 hours a day.

**Fuel Waivers** - To alleviate possible fuel shortages across the continental U.S. and to help meet emergency demand in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi, EPA will temporarily allow refiners, importers, distributors, carriers and retail outlets to supply gasoline and diesel fuels that do not meet standards for emissions. This waiver is effective immediately and will continue through Sept. 15, 2005.

**Water Safety & Assessment** - EPA teams are currently assessing, evaluating, and supporting drinking water and wastewater facilities in Louisiana and Mississippi.

**Hazardous Waste Disposal** - EPA personnel are overseeing and offering technical assistance in the disposal of hazardous waste and other debris left behind by the storm. Teams are working closely with the Coast Guard to conduct assessments of potential oil spills and chemical releases caused by the hurricane.

**Emergency Response Teams** - EPA has mobilized 12 environmental emergency response teams to the affected areas in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. These teams are providing assistance with overall “search and recovery” efforts and are conducting initial assessments of the environmental impacts of Hurricane Katrina, including potential impacts from chemical facilities, oil refineries and water treatment plants.

**Recovery** - EPA has sent 39 of its watercraft to assist in the current rescue efforts.

**Air Surveillance** - EPA's environmental surveillance aircraft are being used to assess spills and chemical releases.

**Technical Expertise** – Environmentally safe clearance standards for the re-occupation of residences and commercial buildings will be established by EPA. EPA has practical and scientific expertise in the environmental health hazards caused by flood waters, especially the effects of mold and mildews.

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## **DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

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The Department of Justice (DOJ) is committed to helping maintain law and order in the affected areas.

**Federal Law Enforcement Operations** – DOJ agencies and personnel are securing Federal law enforcement facilities and are working on-site and from relocation sites in Shreveport and Baton Rouge to continue enforcing Federal laws.

**Assistance to State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies** – DOJ components are drawing upon our longstanding close relations with state and local law enforcement to assist them to the maximum extent possible. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the United States Marshals Service (USMS), and the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) are responding to requests from state and local agencies for communications, air support, HAZMAT, medical, and other assistance. DEA is coordinating with Texas and Arkansas Pharmacy Boards to provide assistance with emergency prescription refill procedures due to requests that have started to come from Louisiana residents. USMS personnel have been deployed to assist with the transport and security of stockpile supplies. The Bureau of Justice Assistance will also be making millions of dollars of grant money immediately available to state and local law enforcement entities in the affected areas.

**Federal Courts** – Federal court facilities are being secured and USMS is also assisting the Federal courts in the Eastern District of Louisiana to re-deploy staff and judges to resume operations in Baton Rouge. USMS and BOP have provided assistance in prisoner transfer and relocation of federal and state prisoners.

**Protecting the Integrity of Relief Efforts** – DOJ has begun work on a task force to deter, investigate, and prosecute disaster-related crimes such as insurance fraud, and charity fraud, and to ensure that fuel and other prices remain at competitive levels.

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## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS)**

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Secretary Mike Leavitt has **declared a Federal Public Health Emergency**.

HHS continues delivering medical supplies, medical personnel and public health expertise to the Gulf region to meet the needs of evacuees and victims of Hurricane Katrina.

HHS is working with federal partners, including the Department of Defense (DoD), to establish **40 federal medical shelters throughout the affected areas with an ultimate goal of reaching 10,000 staffed medical shelter beds in these facilities.** The first 10 federal medical shelters will be set up at military installations in the Gulf region. HHS will provide the equipment and supplies, DoD will provide the basic facilities and HHS, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), DoD and the National Disaster Medical Service (NDMS) will staff the federal medical shelters with the necessary healthcare and support personnel.

HHS has already delivered the first 250 beds and associated equipment for a medical shelter set up at Louisiana State University (LSU) in Baton Rouge (90 miles from New Orleans) that can meet the medical needs of those being evacuated from New Orleans and surrounding areas. 94 additional Public Health Service officers will arrive in Baton Rouge today bringing the total to 132 federal healthcare staff helping at the LSU medical shelter. As of Wednesday evening, the facility has **screened more than 300 patients**; 96 have been admitted for in-patient care.

HHS is using the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) to identify available hospital beds, and working with DOD, VA and others to move patients to these facilities. At last count, there were **2,600 beds available in a 12-state area around the affected area. Nationwide, the NDMS has identified 40,000 available beds in participating hospitals.**

Louisiana state officials have received 27 pallets of requested medical supplies from the **Strategic National Stockpile.** These pallets include basic first aid material (such as bandages, pads, ice packs, etc), blankets and patient clothing, suture kits, sterile gloves, stethoscopes, blood pressure measuring kits, and portable oxygen tanks. This equipment is being used to set up the mobile hospital at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge.

HHS is disseminating public health messages (PSAs) warning about the safe consumption of food and water. HHS is also warning the public to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning from the use of generators.

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#### **DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)**

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All HUD operations performed out of the New Orleans, LA Field Office have been devolved to the Fort Worth, TX Regional Office.

HUD has established a toll-free number (866-641-8102) for the public and its employees to get information on HUD operations.

The Office of Housing issued, on August 31, 2005, a mortgagee letter reminding lenders of the 203(h) disaster program and encouraging servicers to delay foreclosure in counties declared federal disaster areas and to consider hurricane damage in the context of any requests for loss mitigation assistance.

Ginnie Mae issued, on August 31, 2005, a letter to all issuers of Ginnie Mae Mortgage Backed Securities (MBS) identifying the various forms of forbearance, including assistance in making payment to MBS investors where homeowners are unable to make payment, and delinquent loans in affected areas are not included in delinquency statistics used in risk monitoring.

**In addition, HUD has identified the following available resources:**

- HUD will make available programs for damaged or destroyed properties. HUD's Section 203(k) loan program enables homebuyers and homeowners who have lost their homes to finance both the purchase and/or refinancing of a house and the cost of its rehabilitation through a single mortgage. It also allows homeowners who have damaged houses to finance the rehabilitation of their existing single-family home. This program encourages lenders to make mortgages available to borrowers who would not otherwise qualify for conventional loans on affordable terms and to residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods.
- HUD will identify vacant multi-family housing, public housing units, and HUD-owned homes in a 500-mile radius of the affected areas that could be used as temporary housing.
- CDBG, HOME, and ESG grantees may reprogram previously awarded grants to redirect their focus to disaster recovery activities but grantees MUST request the reprogram from HUD.
- There are currently HUD 500 Real Estate Owned (REO) properties in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama that could potentially be used as temporary housing.
- Public Housing Capital Fund Reserve for Emergencies and Natural Disasters granted to PHAs on a first come, first serve basis – must be obligated by the end of FY'05 (\$29 million available).
- Disaster voucher assistance for any family rendered homeless (\$200 million with authority from Congress).
- Vouchers for replacement units for displaced public housing families or displaced residents living in other HUD multifamily projects (\$50 million with authority from Congress).
- Indian Community Development Block Grant funding (up to \$300,000 per grantee with authority from Congress) for disaster relief for Indian housing and Tribal areas.

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**DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR (DOI)**

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**Mineral Management Service (MMS):** MMS, part of the DOI, oversees 1.76 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf, managing offshore energy and minerals while protecting the human, marine, and coastal environments through advanced science and technology research. MMS Hurricane Katrina Evacuation and Production Shut-in Statistics as of September 1, 2005.

- The equivalent of 51.65% of 819 manned platforms and 47.76% of 137 rigs currently operating in the GOM remain evacuated.
- Today's shut-in oil production is 1,356,498 BOPD. This shut-in oil production is equivalent to 90.43% of the daily oil production in the GOM, which is currently approximately 1.5 million BOPD.

- Today's shut-in gas production is 7.866 BCFPD. This shut-in gas production is equivalent to 78.66% of the daily gas production in the GOM, which is currently approximately 10 BCFPD.
- The cumulative shut-in oil production for the period 8/26/05-9/1/05 is 7,441,566 bbls, which is equivalent to 1.359% of the yearly production of oil in the GOM which is approximately 547.5 million barrels.
- The cumulative shut-in gas production 8/26/05-9/1/05 is 42.079 BCF, which is equivalent to 1.153% of the yearly production of gas in the GOM which is approximately 3.65 TCF.

#### MMS monitoring, reporting and responding to energy supply

Consistent with regulatory parameters, MMS is communicating with energy operators regarding the status of production and exploration facilities and providing daily updates on the web and to all major news organizations on key Gulf of Mexico production statistics. MMS is tracking all incident reports in the Gulf of Mexico, and is coordinating with the energy operators to address the mutual need for helicopters to perform fly over inspections. The MMS New Orleans district performed a fly over of key facilities in the hurricanes path to assess status. Four of Five districts in GOM region are back up and running and the GOM regional operations, temporarily located in Houston, are advising companies on their plans to bring production back on line. MMS is coordinating with the Coast Guard as a contingency for oil spill response.

#### **Other Interior efforts:**

As part of the National Response Plan, the Department of the Interior supports Federal interagency efforts to assist State and local emergency response. The Department of the Interior and the United States Department of Agriculture are currently deploying "Incident Management Teams" to support FEMA recovery activities in the disaster areas. These teams are trained and experienced in wildland fire response, and have agreed under "Emergency Support Function 4 - Firefighting" of the National Response Plan to assist with coordination of operational and logistics activities during disasters. Teams are being deployed in LA, MS and AL. The Bureau of Reclamation supports the US Army Corps of Engineers, lead agency for organizing Federal support under the National Response Plan for Emergency Support Function 3 - Public Works and Engineering. Bureau of Reclamation personnel are now being mobilized for deployment in the coming days to assist with a wide variety of tasks including assistance on developing strategies for remediation of levee breaches in LA.

United States Geological Survey is dedicating resources to documenting the extent of the storm surge, which is historically significant. The USGS Coastal Processes Program will fly the impacted area to determine shoreline change and wetland loss. USGS has been requested by BOR to provide imagery of the levee breach on Lake Ponchartrain.

The National Parks Service's historic properties and cultural resources program personnel are beginning the process of contacting state counterparts.

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## DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL)

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- **DOL Dedicated Webpage.** The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has created a dedicated webpage that serves as a one-stop shop for hurricane assistance. This webpage provides links to various resources so that individuals, who are looking for employment-related assistance or safety & health information, or the media, who are interested in publicizing the help that is available, can access information quickly and easily. The webpage can be accessed at: <http://www.dol.gov/opa/hurricane-recovery.htm>
- **National Emergency Grants (NEGs).** On August 31, 2005, the Department of Labor awarded Alabama \$4 million in NEG funds to respond to Hurricane Katrina disaster relief efforts. Impacted states can apply for NEG funds that can be used to temporarily employ dislocated workers. These funds can be used to employ workers on projects that provide food, clothing, shelter and other humanitarian assistance for disaster victims.

DOL has also expanded the availability of NEG funds previously awarded to states for other disasters to include areas impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Florida was awarded \$75 million for the hurricane damage of 2004. \$50 million of these funds remain. DOL has approved Florida's August 29, 2005 request to use these funds for areas impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Alabama was awarded \$2.5 million in October 2004 for Hurricane Ivan cleanup. Approximately \$1.8 million of that award remains available. DOL approved Alabama's request on August 30, 2005, to use these funds for areas impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

- **Toll-free Help Line (1-866-4-USA-DOL or 1-866-487-2365).** The Department of Labor, in partnership with states that have elected to participate, manages a toll-free help line to help refer workers, employers, and other inquirers to the workforce investment system's One-Stop Career Center system for services in the location closest to the caller, or to other services, as appropriate.
- **Occupational Safety and Health.** The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is making available technical assistance and resources to help protect those participating in cleanup and recovery efforts. This assistance is being distributed in the form of briefings to power company employees in affected communities, as well as public service announcements (PSAs) that have been released in the impacted areas and are available on the DOL web site at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).
- **Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA).** EBSA is extending pension plan filing deadlines.

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT)

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A strike team of senior DOT executives from several different modes of transportation will arrive in Baton Rouge this morning to work directly with the other agencies on the ground.

Emergency Support Function 1 – Transportation: Under ESF-1 of the National Response Plan, DOT has over 66 staff deployed to the affected region in addition to the DOT Headquarters Operations Center and staffing at the National Response Coordination Center.

DOT provided over 797 trucks to move 2282 truckloads containing 6.7 million Meals, Ready to Eat, 18.4 million liters of water, 20,960 tarps, 10,400 rolls of plastic sheeting, 3.4 million pounds of ice, 10 mobile homes, 10 53' reefer trucks, 42 trailers of tent kits, 1 power unit for a disaster portable mortuary unit, 1 trailer of wash kits, 249 generators, 605 buses, 5 helicopters, 20 containers of pre-positioned disaster supplies, 7 trucks of medical supplies, 2 trailers of oxygen cylinders, 135,000 blankets, 13,500 cots, 200 tables, 19 forklifts, and thirteen 100-person and nine 50-person Joint Field Office kits. Additional items in transit include 90 generators, 80,000 disaster meals, 10,319,980 MREs, 1,600,000 pounds of ice, 6- 53' refrigerator trucks, 260 travel trailers, 450 mobile homes

DOT is coordinating with FEMA to provide 605 busses to facilitate the evacuation of up to 25,000 personnel from New Orleans. A plan is under consideration to utilize Amtrak trains between Houston and New Orleans.

Air Resource Coordination: DOT is coordinating DOD, USCG and Customs and Border Patrol rotary wing and fixed wing aircraft for relief and search and rescue efforts.

Critical Airports: DOT has placed top priority on restoration of service for critical relief airports including: Louis Armstrong in New Orleans; Stennis International; Gulfport-Biloxi International. Two dozen DOT/FAA personnel are on scene at these facilities making necessary infrastructure repairs to increase near-term operational capabilities.

Pipelines: DOT is coordinating with DOE, FEMA, and other federal, state, and local agencies to ensure the restoration of power for oil pipeline pumping stations. Limited service on both major refined product pipelines was restored late Wednesday. We expect to have full power restored on one pipeline (Plantation) later today and emergency generators are in transit to augment throughput on the other pipeline (Colonial). DOT has suspended Hours of Service rules to increase the movement by truck of petroleum products.

DOT Vessels: DOT's Maritime Administration has two 700-foot Roll-On-Roll-Off ships at the Poland Avenue pier in downtown New Orleans, which are currently available through ESF-1 for emergency support. Other Maritime Administration assets are being readied to move into affected ports.

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY (Treasury)**

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**Internal Revenue Service Tax Relief:** The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced special relief for taxpayers in disaster areas designated for individual relief. These taxpayers generally will have until October 31, 2005, to file tax returns and submit tax payments. This relief includes the September 15 due date for estimated taxes and for calendar-year corporate returns with automatic extensions. Because of the Presidentially-declared disaster area, numerous other tax relief provisions also are triggered. The IRS has initiated a series of public outreach efforts and is working with the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and other groups to ensure that affected taxpayers are aware of the relief provisions available to them under the tax law.

**Federal Regulator Actions:** Treasury is coordinating closely with the financial regulators. We note that the Federal Reserve is prepared has implemented its emergency cash replenishment plans for the impacted areas. In addition, the Fed has shifted their cash management function from New Orleans, Louisiana, to their Birmingham, Alabama, office. Also, the Federal Reserve has shifted the check processing normally done in their New Orleans office to Birmingham.

**Encouraging National Banks to Work with Customers:** The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) issued a proclamation authorizing national banks to close offices affected by the hurricane temporarily. The OCC also encouraged national banks to consider various alternatives that may include: extending the terms of loan repayments; restructuring a borrower's debt obligations; and, easing credit terms for new loans to certain borrowers, consistent with prudent banking practice.

**Encouraging Thrifts to Assist Customers:** The Office of Thrift Supervision (OTS) urged thrifts in affected areas to consider all reasonable steps available to assist customers' cash and financial needs in connection with hurricane evacuation and recovery procedures. In order to facilitate rebuilding efforts in the areas affected, OTS will consider granting emergency exceptions to applicable appraisal standards; take into account an institution's disaster relief efforts when evaluating the institution's Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) performance; consider granting extensions of time for submission of regulatory filing requirements; allow reasonable loan documentation deficiencies necessitated by thrift office relocation or personnel shortages during the period of recovery efforts; consider temporarily waiving the Qualified Thrift Lender requirements for institutions meeting their capital requirements in order to help rebuild businesses; and accelerate procedures to approve temporary facilities so that thrifts with destroyed or severely damaged facilities will be able to continue to serve their customers and communities.

**Aiding Savings Bonds Owners:** The Bureau of the Public Debt (BPD) took action to assist victims by expediting the replacement or payment of United States Savings Bonds for owners of affected counties and parishes. The emergency procedures are effective immediately and will

allow authorized agents to redeem Series EE and I savings bonds that are less than one year old which are presented for payment by their owners through the end of October 2005.

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## **SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (SSA)**

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The Social Security Administration has been in constant contact throughout the day with the United States Postal Service. Social Security checks are delivered to beneficiaries on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month (for Title XVI ) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> of every month (Title II). While a majority of beneficiaries receive payment by electronic deposit, a large number continue to receive paper checks. According to best estimates – and these are very rough – the Postal authorities believe they will be unable to deliver approximately 20,000 paper checks in Louisiana zip codes and another 6,000 in Mississippi and Alabama.

At 8:30 am, September 1, Social Security and the Postal Service will have a conference call, at which time we are likely to know the location of approximately five emergency postal stations in the affected areas that will be set up for mail pickup, including paper social security checks. SSA will have staff present at each location to assist in the distribution of checks to claimants who come to these emergency centers.

SSA has invoked emergency payment procedures for those affected by this disaster. The following is the information we are disseminating throughout the affected areas:

The Social Security Administration is doing everything it can to ensure that monthly payments get to beneficiaries affected by Hurricane Katrina.

### **FOR DIRECT DEPOSIT:**

- If you receive your Social Security payment by direct deposit, your payment is scheduled to be deposited into your account as usual. However, if you experience any difficulty getting your payment, you can go to any open Social Security office and request an immediate payment.

### **FOR PAPER CHECKS:**

- If you normally get a paper check and do not receive it, you can go to any open Social Security office and request an immediate payment.

### **IF YOU ARE IN AN AFFECTED AREA WHERE SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICES ARE CLOSED:**

- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is in the process of establishing emergency centers. Once established, Social Security employees will be there to help you get your payment.

For more information on the nearest open Social Security office, you can call 1-800-772-1213.

**THE FOLLOWING IS AN EDITED COMPILATION OF UPDATES THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN RECEIVING FROM ITS FIELD OPERATIONS SINCE THE HURRICANE LANDED ON THE GULF COAST:**

**August 31, 2005 Update (12 noon)**

- The following Louisiana offices will closed as indicated:
  - Hammond No electricity expected until next week
  - Covington No electricity expected until next week
  - Bogalusa No electricity expected until next week
  - New Orleans Westbank Indefinitely
  - New Orleans East Indefinitely
  - New Orleans Bywater Indefinitely
  - New Orleans Downtown Indefinitely
  - Kenner Indefinitely
  - New Orleans TSC Indefinitely
  - New Orleans OHA Indefinitely
  - Metairie OHA Indefinitely
  - New Orleans DDS Indefinitely
  - The Baton Rouge DDS
- Louisiana Governor Blanco announced with FEMA that plans are underway to move people from the Super Dome shelter in New Orleans to the Astro Dome in Houston.
  - Houston management is working with the Red Cross and FEMA to establish service points for arriving refugees
  - SSA will have staff present in the Astro Dome to assist with dispersal of benefit checks, as well as any in other centers that may be established for Hurricane refugees, wherever they may be located.
- FEMA in Baton Rouge is making plans to move assessment teams into the areas of New Orleans and southeastern Louisiana.
  - Up to 50 teams are being formed to move into affected areas. SSA will have employees attached to the FEMA teams.
  - Transportation in and out of affected areas is a major problem.
  - Health issues are a growing concern.
  - Lodging for temporarily assigned SSA employees is being addressed.
- Space in the Houston TSC is being used to set up an alternate Field Office Support Unit for long-term assistance for south Louisiana.

## **ACTIONS PENDING:**

- On-site damage assessment needs to be made. It is uncertain at this time as to when SSA will have access into the city of New Orleans. The damage to offices, ability of employees to return to their homes and back to work, as well as the restoration of utilities will directly affect actions required to provide service.
- Coordination has been conducted through the DHS Guard Services to have on-site evaluation done at locations where guard services are contracted as soon as law enforcement officials allow access into New Orleans.
- On-going communication with emergency response organizations and political leaders will continue to be necessary to relay SSA responses to the situation.
- The Dallas OIG is working with the Regional Office to have agents accompany assessment teams into New Orleans when permitted to help gain access to SSA facilities and provide security against looters.
- The general information telephone lines for the New Orleans field offices are being forwarded to alternate field office locations in Louisiana to provide service to the public.
- Status of Louisiana OHA offices:
  - The Alexandria Hearing Office is open; however, the hurricane damaged the T1 lines for telecommunication. They are operational using the backup (56K modem) system only. This means they have no CPMS access, no internet access and virtually no e-mail access. Video hearing capability is also down. MCI informed the office that they cannot estimate when repairs to their telecommunication system will be made.
- Status of Louisiana DDS offices:
  - The New Orleans Area Office is closed until further notice. The DDS is located in Metairie, in an area known to have flooding, but housed on the third through fifth floors of their building. We have had preliminary discussions with DDS management and ODD regarding the possible need for temporary DDS space, though we are delaying a formal request until we get more information on damage to the DDS facility.
  - Shreveport is operating normally. The office was open on Monday but had no access to their legacy (Levy) system. That access has been restored today.
- ROQA employees have volunteered and are arranging to assist the Louisiana DDS with the adjudication of RSI/SSI/DI claims.

- To assist with the work flow in Louisiana, ROQA has taken the following actions.
  - Requested OQA/ODPQ to reduce the regional PER samples to the Dallas DQB so that they might more readily offer claims assistance in the special processing unit.
  - Requested OQA/ODPQ that the PER sample be reduced for LA DDS to slow the flow of cases out of LA as the other 2 DDSs in Baton Rouge and Shreveport assist with the development of New Orleans cases. An additional consideration is to increase slightly the PER sample to other DQB's to ensure that OQA meets the 50% national goal ending in 9/05.
  - Requested that OQA/ODPQ stop any potential sample enrichment to the Louisiana DDSs.
- SSA's Baton Rouge Field Office is the on-site coordinator with FEMA. FEMA is working to set up disaster recovery centers where the public can go for help. SSA will be a part of these centers.
- The Regional Office is identifying members to form assessment teams. Each team will consist of an executive team leader and at least two other people (i.e., one person from Facilities and one from Automation).
  - Three mobile satellite communication units are being sent from offices in New Mexico where they are normally used for remote location service. The sets will arrive by tomorrow (8/31/05) for use by the assessment teams.
- The temporary Field Office Support Unit (A86) in the Regional Office Training Center will open at noon today (8/31/05) to assist with claims.

#### **Coordination with Other Agencies:**

RC Ramona Schuenemeyer personally spoke with Gary Jones, Regional FEMA Director, to coordinate SSA support to employees and the public. Continued coordination with GSA and FEMA is established with the Regional Office Task Force. SSA is approved for on-site coordination with FEMA. Baton Rouge Manager Kevin Portz has been designated to serve on-site.

The Federal Employee Education and Assistance Fund (FEEAF) has been contacted about accepting donations and coordinating for assistance for affected employees as a precautionary measure.

**Service to the Public:**

The Regional Office has established a special task force to address issues affecting employees and the public. Representatives on the task force include other components for message and action coordination.

A temporary Field Office Support Unit is being established in the RO Training Center. Two classrooms are being used to place computers and phone lines. Employees are identified from the Dallas – Fort Worth area to staff the FOSU and Tom Tijerina has been appointed as initial supervisor. The FOSU will be open by noon on Tuesday.

As a precautionary measure if long-term service is needed, space at the Houston TSC has been identified as a possible FOSU location. Site survey is underway to determine what would be required to make the site operational.

The TSC Director notified the 800 number system with key points to be addressed for service for customers from the Louisiana area, including directing claims to the FOSU.

An estimated 180,000 beneficiaries and 45,000 recipients are in the greater New Orleans area.

Instructions have gone to all field offices on emergency procedures for lost checks and emergency payments. SSI paper checks are due out on Thursday and Title II checks on Friday. Coordination is underway to address the question of where to cash checks once they are issued. Based on information learned from other regions, direct coordination with banks may be necessary for customer referrals.

The Dallas Region Internet site at [www.socialsecurity.gov/dallas/hurricane](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/dallas/hurricane) has a list of offices that are closed. Included on the site are instructions for employees affected by the storm to call the National Emergency Number at 866-772-2996 (dialing 6 then #). A recorded message is available with updated information.

**Worksites and Security:**

Coordination is underway with FEMA, GSA, and the New Orleans FEB to identify possible alternate service locations and storage facilities if necessary to provide emergency operations as well as store and secure records and high value equipment.

An emergency response team is being identified to go into south Louisiana as soon as possible to conduct on-site coordination and service. Laptop access to the SSA system is being verified.

## **Communications:**

The first priority has been to ensure employees are informed and safely away from danger. Closely associated with employee communications is the reassurance that actions are underway to address issues associated with the hurricane damage and returning service to people in the affected areas.

Communications with managers and employees in Louisiana is very limited due to widespread outages and overloaded cell services.

As noted, communication is established with emergency response organizations with plans in place for long-term assistance and coordination.

SSA's National Press Office and local public affairs specialists are disseminating information about emergency payment procedures for those affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Congressional notifications are being coordinated with OLCA.

AFGE has been notified of actions taken by the Region.

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## **VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)**

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**Procurement Assistance:** We believe that we could use our prime vendor contract (McKesson) to facilitate the procurement of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies (limited) using just in time procurement processes. This option could be exercised through the local VA medical center in support of the temporary medical facilities being established by HHS.

**Public Health Service Expertise:** VA maintains a staff of expert public health practitioners who could provide consult to the theater of operations, either remotely or (in a more limited capacity) on the ground. VA can provide guidelines and support for immunizations.

**Environmental Expertise:** VA has environmental and engineering experts who have been trained to support decontamination for radiologic, chemical, and biologic events. These experts could provide remote consultation or (in a more limited capacity) on the ground. This may be especially useful in New Orleans where certain facilities, now flooded, may contain radiologic, chemical, or biologic materials that require expertise in identification and disposal. VA's MERRT teams could provide special (on the ground) expertise in the disposal of radioactive materials.

**Staffed Beds:** VA could provide a combined total of 3,534 beds from its 157 VA hospitals, although VA is anticipating an increase in veteran's admissions both within the affected area,

and due to self-evacuated veterans, outside of the disaster area. This could also decrease this bed availability in the coming days.

**Staffing:** VA has slightly over 750 personnel who have already volunteered to support medical requirements in the aftermath of this event. We are mobilizing approximately 150 of these personnel to support four VA hospitals in the affected area. VA anticipates that a formal call from Secretary of HHS (through VA) would encourage many more of VA's 60,000 nurses and 13,000 physicians and other health care personnel to volunteer. VA would work closely with HHS and VA medical center directors to ensure that those volunteers that can be released from primary mission (direct healthcare of veterans) are identified to HHS in response to HHS's specific identification of need.

**Counseling Services:** Through the Readjustment Counseling Centers (a.k.a. "Vet Centers"), VA can provide expert counseling services for those conditions frequently encountered in disaster situations (e.g., PTSD, anxiety, depression). Vet Center staff can also provide general support to disseminate information on the ground about services available and to interface with families. At this moment, 18 Vet Center staff are have volunteered to provide such services.

**Facilities:** VA has 157 hospitals around the country that could meet a variety of needs including staffed beds, unstaffed beds that could be used if staffing were provided, and heated/cooled space. VA is eager to work with other Federal agencies to meet whatever needs emerge.

**Replacement Checks:** VA has a system in place to issue replacement checks to those who did not receive their monthly disability payments.

**Residences for Disaster Victim Use:** VA owns approximately 7,700 single-family residences throughout the US that could be made available for temporary occupancy by victims of the disaster through a MOA with FEMA.

**Mortgage Counselors:** VA Home Loan Program has Loan Specialists and specific guidelines to help veterans who are in need of assistance on matters relating to their VA home loans. VA works with lenders/loan servicers about the guidelines they are expected to adhere to during a protracted disaster recovery period.

**National Cemeteries:** VA has a number of cemeteries that can be used to bury veterans.

**Mortuary Specialists:** VA can assemble teams of mortuary specialist to assist state and local authorities.

**Clean-up crews with equipment:** VA can assemble teams of clean-up crews with their own equipment.